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- NFL Scores
- CFB Scores
- NHL Scores
- NBA Scores
- Columns
- Lions/NFL
- Lions Talk
- Pistons/NBA
- Pistons Talk
- Red Wings/NHL
- Wings Talk
- Tigers/MLB
- Tigers Talk
- Shock/WNBA
- MSU
- U-M
- Big 10 Talk
- More Colleges
- High Schools
- Preps Talk
- Golf
- Motor Sports
- Outdoors
- More Sports
- Essentials
- Homepage

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[Tue](#) [Wed](#) [Thu](#) [Fri](#)
[Sat](#) [Sun](#) [Mon](#) [Today](#)

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- Photo Store
- Multimedia
- Weather
- Horoscope
- Lottery
- Crossword
- Sudoku
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- Editorials
- Blogs
- Columnists
- CyberSurveys
- Forums
- Autos**
- Autos Insider
- Auto Shows
- Autos Weblog
- Drive
- New Car Photos
- Car Reviews



Detroit News file photo

'Ty and the Babe,' a new novel by author and journalist Tom Stanton, chronicles the rivalry between Cobb, right, and Ruth, as well as the pair's famous golf match in 1941. The match took place in Boston and New York and ended at the Grosse Ile Golf and Country Club.

Behind the Scenes: Vartan Kupelian and Mike O'Hara

'Ty and the Babe' a grand slam



For baseball fans, Tom Stanton's book is a terrific read.

For those who combine a love of baseball and golf -- as we do -- it's the mother lode.

Stanton is an author and journalist who lives in New Baltimore. He has degrees from Michigan State and Oakland University, and taught journalism at the University of Detroit

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- [Obituaries](#)
- [-- Death Notices](#)
- [Schools](#)
- [Detroit History](#)
- Nation/World**
- [Nation/World](#)
- [Politics/Gov](#)
- [-- Election](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Religion](#)
- [Technology](#)
- Sports**
- [Lions/NFL](#)
- [Pistons/NBA](#)
- [Red Wings/NHL](#)
- [Tigers/MLB](#)
- [Shock/WNBA](#)
- [MSU](#)
- [U-M](#)
- [More Colleges](#)
- [High Schools](#)
- [Golf](#)
- [Motor Sports](#)
- [Outdoors](#)
- [More Sports](#)
- [Scoreboards](#)
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- [Events](#)
- [-- Events Calendar](#)
- [Movies/TV/DVD](#)
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- Forums**
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- [Freshman Talk](#)
- [Wings Talk](#)
- [Lions Talk](#)
- [Pistons Talk](#)
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Mercy. His passion is baseball and writing books about the sport. He has written four, and the latest, "Ty and the Babe" is a grand slam.

The book chronicles not only the baseball rivalry between Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth but also their famous 1941 golf match that stretched from Boston to New York to metro Detroit, at Grosse Ile Golf and Country Club for the third and deciding contest.

Every golfer searches for a secret weapon. It's at Grosse Ile that Cobb found his. That's as far as we'll go with the plot. Of the many terrific anecdotes in the book, another that stood out is that the match in Detroit attracted more observers than those in New York and Boston combined. The anecdote supports the notion that Detroit and Michigan are the country's leading hotbed for golf and have been for decades.

"Until two or three years ago, I wasn't even familiar with their golf tournament," Stanton said. "I began to delve into it."

Stanton is a baseball fan much more than he is a golf fan. Among the things he discovered by studying the golf aspect of the Cobb-Ruth rivalry is that, "It was obvious these guys had resolved their (differences) to some degree that they could tolerate being on a golf course with one another," Stanton said.

"What I loved about it is that Cobb, an extremely competitive individual, was trying to balance his desire to win (the golf match) with the desire not to lose Ruth as a friend," he said. "Being able to document that, paint that image, was gratifying.

"I loved the Detroit connection, Grosse Ile, this secret weapon."

So did we.

Book review II

"Playing for Pizza" is the latest novel from **John Grisham** and is about an American quarterback who gets knocked around in the NFL and finally knocked out of Cleveland.

"Playing for Pizza" is entertaining and a wonderful way to spend a few hours on a Sunday afternoon if you're so frustrated by your NFL team that you can no longer bear to waste four hours watching.

Grisham is a huge baseball fan. After reading an earlier award-winning work by Stanton, "The Final Season," Grisham contacted his fellow author to tell him how much he enjoyed the book.

Media rare

In his Monday Morning Quarterback column, **Peter King** of Sports Illustrated dismissed the Lions with this four-word comment: "The Lions are frauds." The previous week, before the Washington massacre, King ranked the Lions 13th in his Fine 15.

Attendance is one of the NHL's biggest stories. ESPN's "Pardon the Interruption" devoted almost two minutes to an analysis of the Red Wings when they didn't sell out their home opener. Sadly for the Wings, the next big story will be their first sellout -- if they have one.

The buzz on the local airwaves is that Lions management does not want talk-show flamethrower **Mike Valenti** on the official pregame and postgame shows, which are scheduled to

That means no sellouts, less money spent at the concession stands and probably a lot less tax income for the city of Detroit."

Kupelian: "The NHL has become Olympic hockey. All skating, no contact. I equate intensity with physical play, with banging and grinding and, yes, fighting. And those silly penalty calls are enough to drive anybody crazy -- and keep old-time hockey fans away."

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- [Music Blog](#)
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be simulcast on WXYT 97.1 and 1270 for next week's Lions-Bucs game. Let's see if the station's management stands by its man.

You can reach Vartan Kupelian at vartan.kupelian@detnews.com. You can reach Mike O'Hara at mike.ohara@detnews.com.

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